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Sierra Nevada Alliance for Peace

Inyo and Mono Counties, California — P. O. Box 1472, Bishop, CA 93514

NEWSLETTER — "Qui tacit, consentit." — January, 1991

Volume 5, Number 1 — He who is silent consents. — Editor: Bob Jellison

10 Reasons for Cease-fire Now!

- A cease-fire would allow sincere diplomatic efforts to be pursued.
- War kills innocent people. We must not help Saddam slaughter his own people.
- A continued blockade is still morally, economically, and politically more effective in accomplishing our long-term goals in the region.
- The U.S. has successfully destroyed Iraq's nuclear research facilities and chemical weapons plants.
- Continued hostilities threaten the possibility of reaching a lasting peace in the Mideast.
- U.S. military casualties have been low but will increase dramatically if we choose to fight a ground war.
- A U.S.-initiated cease-fire would restore our image of sincerely desiring a peaceful solution.
- President Bush has kept his pledge of using military force; he could now forge a diplomatic solution without "losing face" to Saddam Hussein.
- The war is costing us $1,000,000,000 a day, all of which will come out of domestic spending or increased taxes.
- The complete destruction of the government institutions and industrial capacity of Iraq is not in our interest given other regional players in the Gulf.

End the Crisis in the Gulf!

Isn't the U.S. just carrying out a UN order on the use of force in the Gulf?

The UN authorized the use of force. It did not mandate it. The behavior of Secretary Baker traveling around the world trying to drum up support for military action was most shameful and not fitting of a world power. Given the history of U.S. - Arab relations, our long-term interests will best be served if military operations are directed and conducted by UN forces, which would include US military forces.

The sanctions did not work. Wasn't the military option the only one?

Sanctions were working. Every economic analysis indicated the sanctions were working better than anyone thought possible. When the sanctions were first put in place, analysts predicted it would take 12 - 18 months for them to completely cripple the Iraqi economy. We gave them only a few months. The Europeans, nearly every past high-ranking government official in the US, and, according to opinion polls conducted before January 15th, half the American public preferred to give sanctions more time to work.

What good would a cease-fire do now? Didn't we already exhaust all diplomatic options?

The U.S. never approached diplomacy with any flexibility despite the urging of Arab and European leaders. Right up to the moment of the U.S. attack, European and Arab proposals were put forward which included the complete withdrawal of Iraq from Kuwait and a UN regional peace conference on the Israeli-Palestinian issue. These were harshly criticized by the US and summarily rejected. While Hussein did not accept these outright, there were many signals of his willingness to negotiate a withdrawal from Kuwait. As early as August 12th, Hussein announced he would comply with the UN Resolutions, if all UN resolutions were enforced including UN Resolution 242 which requires Israel to withdraw from the occupied territories. While not acceptable to many Westerners, this could have provided and still does provide the means to begin serious negotiations on a diplomatic settlement.

Now that the war has begun, shouldn't we militarily defeat Saddam Hussein so we can demand our own terms of a settlement?

Even in victory, we will have to negotiate a just regional peace settlement. The lessons of World War I and indeed World War II, provide ample evidence that peace terms which favor the interests of only one side will lead to future violence. This is especially true in the Gulf where there are cultural misunderstandings and resentment which go back thousands of years. A military victory will be hollow indeed if it leads to further tensions in the Gulf. The US will never be in a position to dictate a lasting regional peace plan. This can only be done with the cooperation of Arab nations. The Camp David Accords reached between Israel and Egypt with Jimmy Carter moderating is the only successful model we have of American diplomacy in Mideastern affairs.

Isn't Saddam another Hitler and don't we have to stop him now to prevent a bloodier war in the future?

There is no doubt that Saddam is an ambitious ruthless dictator. His bloody invasion of Kuwait is indefensible. However, if he is a Hitler, it is we in the West who have created him. The US, Germany, USSR, and France have all helped him build his fearsome military machine. Earlier we had supported the Shah's ruthless regime to protect our interests. When he fell from power, we supported Iraq against Iran. We are now negotiating with Assad of Syria in our efforts to topple Saddam Hussein. Syria is well-known for sponsoring terrorism

Continued on next page

and has been linked to the bombing of our marines in Lebanon. Ruthless dictators will always rise to power if we send billions of dollars in arms first to one country and then to another in an effort to protect our economic interests. The cycle will only be broken by a regional peace settlement and a reduction in the arms trade in which the US is now the leader.

I opposed the use of force, but now that we are at war shouldn't we support our troops and our president?

You can support our young men and women in uniform without supporting the President's misguided use of massive military force. We all pray they will return safely. The massive use of military force was premature and counter to our long-term interests in the Gulf. It was unwise on January 15th and continues to be. The best support we can give our country and our young men and women is to disengage from military action, pursue a regional peace settlement, and bring our troops home.

Things you can do:

Inform yourself. Avoid catching war fever. Listen to "All Things Considered" on NPR (KUNR-90.9, 5pm daily) or watch in-depth news coverage like the McNeil-Lehrer Report (CH6, 5pm M-F) which cover the issues rather than sensationalizing minute to minute coverage of the war.

Speak to others. Listen to the concerns and fears of your friends and co-workers and then discuss why a cease-fire is in our own interest and the people's of the Mideast.

Call or write your representatives.

Senator John Seymour
(202) 224-3553
Senator Alan Cranston
(202) 224-3841
Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Hon. Bill Thomas
(202) 225-2915
Hon. Richard Lehman
(202) 225-4540
House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

President Bush
The White House
Washington, D.C. 20500

White House Comment Line
(202) 456-1111

Celebrate Martin Luther King's Vision

We have guided missiles and misguided men.

Before it is too late, we must narrow the gaping chasm between our proclamations of peace and our lowly deeds which precipitate and perpetuate war. We are called upon to look up from the quagmire of military programs and defense commitments and read the warnings on history's signposts.

One day we must come to see that peace is not merely a distant good that we seek but a means by which we arrive at that goal. We must pursue peaceful ends through peaceful means.

There is nothing, except a tragic death wish, to prevent us from reordering our priorities, so that the pursuit of peace will take precedence over the pursuit of war.

Those of us who love peace must organize as effectively as the war hawks. As they spread the propaganda of war, we must spread the propaganda of peace. We must combine the fervor of the civil rights movement with the peace movement. We must demonstrate, teach, and preach, until the very foundations of our nation are shaken. We must work unceasingly to lift this nation that we love to a higher destiny, to a new plateau of compassion, to a more noble expression of humaneness.

But there are some things in our social system to which all of us ought to be maladjusted.... I never intend to become adjusted to the madness of militarism and the self-defeating method of physical violence.

We pray for the safe return of our young men and women and for a lasting peace in the Mideast.

CANDLE LIGHT VIGILS
6 pm, Fridays in Talmadge Park
(Downtown, Main & Academy)

SNAP MEETING
February 3rd, 7:00 pm
393 Mt. Tom Rd. (For info 873-8439)

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